

REMARKS

Applicants note that the last Office Action did not take into consideration the preliminary amendment filed by certificate of mail dated June 11, 2003. Accordingly, the amendments made therein are re-presented herein along with additional amendments addressing the objections raised by the Examiner.

In the last Action, the specification was objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. The Examiner stated that the specification fails to disclose a "front end in a semispherical shape or in a shape of a mountain" as recited in claim 1 or "a recess portion provided on the other side" as recited in claim 3.

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The Examiner cited various informalities in the claims.

Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider et al. The Examiner stated that Schneider discloses a wristwatch having a main body 1, a bezel 4, a bayonet structure having a projected portion 9 fitted into a recessed portion 15 of the main body, the projected portion being integral with a member 8. The Examiner stated that the shape of the projected portion 9 is

an obvious variable with the only constraint being that it engages in recess 15.

Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Vermont. The Examiner stated that Vermont discloses wristwatch including an inner case body 1 having a watch function part 3, an outer case body 2 containing an inner portion for accommodating the inner case 1, and a bezel 5 for sandwiching the inner case to the outer case.

By the present response, the specification has been suitably revised to correct informalities and to place it in better conformance with U.S. practice. Claims 1-4 have been amended in formal respects to improve the wording and place them in better conformance with U.S. practice. The Examiner's indefiniteness rejections are believed to have been overcome.

To provide a fuller scope of coverage, new claims 5-19 have been added. Adequate support for the subject matter recited in these claims may be found in the specification as originally filed.

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-19 patentably distinguish over the prior art of record.

The present invention relates to a bezel attaching structure for a wrist watch and to a wrist watch having an exchangeable bezel.

Wristwatches having decorative bezels fixedly and permanently attached to a region surrounding a watch glass are known. Generally, the bezel has a doughnut shape in conformity with an outer shape of the watch and is permanently attached to a surface thereof. Further, the bezel serves also as a lid of the watch case and the watch glass is adhered to a hole portion of the bezel, whereby the bezel presses against the watch case to thereby hermetically seal the case and cannot be removed without a special tool. A rotational bezel structure is also known which is rotatably attached to the watch case and can be removed using a special tool.

The present provides a wristwatch with a bezel that may be removed by a user without the need for a special tool.

In accordance with one aspect of the present invention recited by amended independent claim 1, the inventive wrist watch comprises a main body having a timepiece movement disposed therein, a bezel mountable to the main body, and a bayonet structure removably rotatably mounting the bezel to the main body and comprising a projected portion having a front end with a semispherical shape provided on one of the bezel and a face of the main body confronting the bezel, and a recess portion provided on the other one of the bezel and the confronting face of the main body and removably fitted to the front end of the projected portion.

Similarly, newly added independent claim 12 recites a wristwatch comprising a main body, a timepiece movement disposed in the main body, a bezel surrounding a display of the timepiece movement, and a bayonet structure removably rotatably mounting the bezel to the main body.

No corresponding structure is disclosed or suggested by the prior art of record.

Schneider et al. fail to disclose or suggest a bayonet structure for removably rotatably mounting a bezel to a main body of a timepiece. In fact, the bezel disclosed by Schneider et al. is not removable.

More specifically, Schneider et al. disclose a rotatable bezel structure 4 that is permanently rotatably mounted to a watch case 1 by a waveshaped spring wire 6 (see col. 1, lines 55-57). The toothed ring 8 cited by the Examiner is used to enable the bezel 4 to rotate in one direction while preventing rotation of the bezel 4 in an opposite direction. Projections 9 of the toothed ring 8 are used for fixing the toothed ring 8 on the bezel 4 by engaging holes 10 in the bezel 4 (see col. 2, lines 7-12). Moreover, Schneider et al. disclose no structure that could reasonably be interpreted as a bayonet structure having the specific structure recited by amended independent claim 1, including a projected portion having a front end with a semispherical

shape provided on one of the bezel and a face of the main body confronting the bezel, an elastic member for urging the bezel away from the main body, and a recess portion provided on the other one of the bezel and the confronting face of the main body and removably fitted to the front end of the projected portion.

Schneider et al. do not render obvious the subject matter of claims 1-19. A claim rejection based upon obviousness must be supported by an evidentiary basis establishing the obviousness of every limitation of a rejected claim. When an obviousness rejection is based upon the obviousness of a proposed modification, such modification must also be suggested by the prior art. In re Fritch, 23 USPQ2d 1780, 1783 (Fed. Cir. 1992) ("The mere fact that the prior art may be modified in the manner suggested by the Examiner does not make the modification obvious unless the prior art suggested the desirability of the modification"). Schneider et al. would not have suggested the incorporation of a bayonet structure for removably rotatably mounting the bezel to the body of the watch. Accordingly, Schneider et al. would not have suggested the modifications required to its timepiece to fall within the scope of amended independent claim 1 and newly added independent claim 12.

Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1 and 12 and dependent claims 2, 3, 5-11 and 13-18 patentably distinguish over the prior art of record.

Nor does Vermont anticipate the structure recited by amended independent claim 4, which recites a wristwatch comprising an inner case body having a timepiece movement disposed therein, an outer case body containing the inner case body and having a strap attached thereto to wrap on a user's arm, and a rotatable bezel for fixing the inner case body to the outer case body by sandwiching the inner case body between the outer case body and the bezel.

Vermont discloses an inner case body 1 fitted into an opening of a holder 2 having a tapered structure matching a peripheral surface of the case body 1 and a surface of the opening of the holder 2 (see col. 1, lines 31-32). The case 1 is sandwiched between a back 4 and a bezel 5 for fixing it in the holder 2.

However, Vermont does not disclose or suggest that the bezel is rotatably mounted for sandwiching the inner case body between the outer case body and the bezel.

Anticipation under 35 U.S.C. §102 requires the identical disclosure by a single reference of all claimed subject matter. See W.L. Gore & Associates v. Garlock, Inc., 220 USPQ 303, 313 (Fed. Cir. 1983), cert. denied, 469 U.S. 851

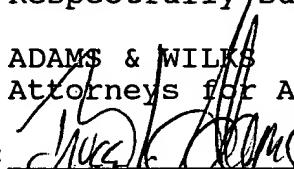
(1984) ("Anticipation requires the disclosure in a single prior art reference of each element of the claim under consideration"). The cited reference to Vermont fails to disclose a rotatably mounted bezel as recited by amended independent claim 4.

Nor does Vermont anticipate newly added dependent claim 19, which requires a bayonet structure for rotatably mounting the bezel to the watch case. Thus, Vermont does not anticipate independent claim 4 and dependent claim 19.

In view of the foregoing amendments and discussion, the application is now believed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance of the claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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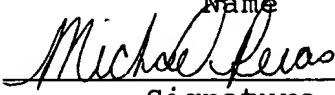
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October 10, 2003

Date